MONTEREY NEWS

January 1999
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TOWN NEWS

The Special Town Meeting held December 7 voted in favor of article one which would assess the five school district towns on a per pupil basis. However, Monterey refused to agree to a three-year rolling average based on 1997 enrollment figures. At the district Finance Committee meeting, held after the Special Town Meeting, Peter Brown said, "We're being asked to subsidize the Sheffield students. Don't even talk to us about '97 enrollments. Stick to this year." Monterey had previously agreed to the rolling average plan, but after continued balking by Sheffield, changed its position. Article two, which was to amend the regional agreement on assessments, was passed over because there is no district agreement.

Article three, a proposal to amend the zoning bylaws by defining the word "dock" as a "flat structure exclusively for water-dependent uses, no wider than four and a half feet and no longer than twenty five feet," was voted down. Dean Amidon asked why the Planning Board had not met with the Lake Garfield Association in this regard, and stated that it was unfair to try to amend the bylaw without consulting with the constituency around the lakes. Since article three was voted down articles four and five, both related to defining the word "dock" in the zoning bylaw, were passed over. Approval of article six to transfer $14,000 from Free Cash to the Highway Maintenance fund was due course since providing for vacation/sick days for employees was overlooked at the Annual Town Meeting in May. The meeting also passed article seven, to transfer $4,000 from Free Cash to the Cemetery Maintenance account.

A second "pothole" grant was given to the Southern Berkshire Regional School District as an unexpected gift due to the efforts of State Senator Andrea Nuciforo. A pothole grant is so named because it is designed to fill gaps in the budget that arise during the year. Last year the district received a state pothole grant of over $200,000 to help cover the operating cost deficit of $400,000. That grant was made on the condition that the district get its financial house in order. Since discovering the deficit business manager Kevin Fox, who came to the district in 1997, has conducted quarterly financial reviews and kept and eagle eye on monies coming into the district and those being spent. As a result the district has lowered its deficit to $173,000 which is a vast improvement. Ideally the district should be in the black by about $200,000.

The second (and current) pothole grant has the condition that the five towns quit the ongoing wrangling, and come up with an assessment agreement by June 1. Superintendent William Cooper said that otherwise it will be a "no go." At this time the district has hired mediator David Burbank of Pittsfield to help bring about a resolution. Cooper has compiled a list of the issues that the towns have agreed on since this argument began last April, as a starting point to the negotiations. The last agreement, for a per pupil assessment, was shot down when Sheffield found its assessment would increase by $300,000. Efforts of the other four towns to ameliorate the increase with a rolling average of enrollment have been declined by Sheffield. At this point Monterey lost patience.

Meanwhile the district is moving ahead with deliberations on the next budget. Select Board member Peter Brown said that the current budget could be in some real trouble this spring because New Marlborough withheld $100,000 when it

© MAGGIE LEONARD

The snow finally fell on December 29, giving these evergreens on Cronk Road a sugar-coating and a holiday look to the landscape.

discovered past over assessments. They plan on withholding this amount until an equitable assessment is agreed on.

Not a happy New Year for those who supported the remodeling of the Town Hall. Monterey's application request for a Community Development Block Grant was turned down. This grant would have provided funds for constructing adequate space for employees in the Town Hall and access for the handicapped, as well as a face lift for a rather tired building.

The Board of Health reports that licensing of septic hauling has increased to sixty dollars per year. Three septic pick ups in a year constitute a septic failure. Information regarding the pick ups must be filed.

The Berkshire Natural Resources Council, represented by Tad Ames, presented a Conservation Restriction to the Select Board on December 7, given by Ann McGinley to the Monterey Land Trust for property on New Marlboro Road.

Kathleen Wasiuk of Monterey was recently elected by the directors of Gould Farm to the Board of Directors. Wasiuk is chair of the Monterey Meeting House capital campaign and president of the Elephant Rock Association. She was formerly on the staff of Gould Farm and has been an associate since 1992. Gould Farm is celebrating its eighty-fifth birthday this year.

— Jane Black

BOB THIERIOT

N. Robert "Bob" Thieriot died of brain cancer on December 31, 1998, at Berkshire Medical Center. He was fifty two years old and was diagnosed with the disease approximately five months ago.

Bob was born in 1946 in San Mateo, California, the son of Ferdinand M. and Frances Dade Thieriot. The Thieriot family was prominent in San Francisco society and he was a descendant of the founders of the San Francisco Chronicle. Bob's parents died in July 1956 while on board the Italian oceanliner Andrea Doria, which went down after a collision with another vessel off Nantucket. He was then raised by his aunt and uncle Yvonne and Ferdinand Stent. He attended Canterbury School in New Milford, Connecticut, and graduated from Stanford University in 1970.

Although from a wealthy family, Bob sought a simpler life and learned to be a farmer, first in the country northwest of San Francisco and then at the two hundred acre Tall Pine Farm in Monterey. He had an avid interest in antique tools, and over the years had amassed a major collection. As a member of the Monterey community Bob served on the Monterey Planning Board, was a regular for breakfast at the Roadside Store, played Sunday morning softball, and was a founding member of the Monterey Land Trust. Due to his active efforts in land preservation, he was honored by Govenor Paul Cellucci last October and presented with the Govenor's Award for Open Space Protection. In total Bob either purchased or restricted 8,100 acres of land for conservation.

In addition to the death of his parents, Bob's life was punctuated by the death of his daughter, Janet, in 1989, who was also a cherished member of the community. Bob attracted national attention when, in a landmark case, he sued both the doctor who treated Janet and the HMO. While the claim against the HMO was unsuccessful it did bring attention to patient's rights for specialized medical care outside the purview of the HMO. However, his negligence case against the doctor who treated Janet was successful, and he used the damages awarded to establish Janet's Fund. An endowment administrated by the Berkshire Taconic Foundation, Janet's Fund is designed to encourage and financially support special projects and educational excellence within the Southern Berkshire School District. Before his death Bob stated that Janet had enjoyed many happy years in the schools of Southern Berkshire, and felt that a fund in her memory was very appropriate.

Bob leaves three sons, William L. Thieriot of New York City, and James M. and Michael A. Thieriot of Monterey, and Amanda M. Thieriot of Monterey; and three brothers, Peter E. Thieriot, John Dade Thieriot, and George Cameron Thieriot, all of San Francisco.

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NEW MARLBOROUGH/ MONTEREY SCHOOL NEWS

The second of four Reading is Fundamental (RIF) distributions took place at the end of November. This one happened to coincide with "National Children's Book Week." This federally sponsored program also receives generous donations from the PTA and the Kiwanis Club of Sheffield. Every distribution is accompanied by a motivational activity. The Bookloft, as in years past, donated shopping bags to be decorated by the students. These one-of-a-kind designer bags featured drawings of their favorite books. They were then used by the Bookloft for patrons' purchases. Perhaps you were one of the fortunate recipients.

The first week in December saw the inauguration of "Spirit Week". Designed to encourage a sense of pride and cooperation with a liberal sprinkling of just plain fun, each day had a theme. Monday was Crazy Sock Day, Tuesday was Mismatched Day, Wednesday was Hat Day, Thursday was Backward Day, and Friday was Blue and Gold Day (blue and gold are the Southern Berkshire Regional School District colors.) By all accounts it was a great success.

Did you notice some creative, handmade trick-or-treat bags this year? Or perhaps your Thanksgiving table was graced with a pine cone turkey. You may have been the recipient of a personalized holiday mug or hand-decorated Christmas cookies. All of these creations came from one source. Several times a month volunteers offer a variety of after school craft activities at New Marlborough Central. These seasonally inspired projects allow for a creative outlet beyond art class. The results are charming and definitely in the keepsake category-unless they happen to be those scrumptious cookies-they are long gone!

— Deborah Mielke

HAVE NEEDLE, WILL(TIME) TRAVEL

Farmers' Arms: A Stitch and A Song

Over forty years ago Barbara Tryon was leafing through a magazine when she saw an ad that caught her fancy. She smiled as she recalled filling out the order form for the cross-stitch sampler kit called "Farmer's Arms."

When the kit arrived, Barbara's mother, Elsie Jost, worked its verses, alphabet, number sequence and farm-related figures. She finished the sampler in 1957 and Barbara hung the piece on the south wall of the dining room at Lowland Farm. There it would be easy to see and yet avoid damage from the open hearth in the winter or sunlight streaming through the windows in the summer.

In the early 1980's, a stranger came to Monterey searching for a meeting place for two groups of Morris dancers, one from Cambridge, Massachusetts, the other from Binghamton, New York. At Dean Amidon's suggestion, he asked Dick Tryon for permission to stay in the Tryon's cottage. Initially Barbara was less than thrilled at the prospect of strangers across the road for a week, she recalled, but the men were model guests.

"Morris" is a kind of English folk dancing once common on May Day. The Middle English root word "morys" means "Moorish", but the dancers often perform in costumes associated with the Robin Hood tales.

Traditionally, Morris dancers do not advertise their performances. In contemporary times, they often drive to a place such as a village green, pile out of their cars, dance and then vanish, only to pop up elsewhere. Whoever is there at the time has the double delight of seeing the dance and telling those less fortunate about it later.

So, although the Tryons' guests danced in Stockbridge, Lenox, New Marlboro and other surrounding towns, no one knew when or where to go to catch them dancing. But since they practiced their art at the intersection of New Marlboro and Wellman Roads for several hours each morning, the Tryons' had a front-row seat all week long.

On the last day of their stay, the men expressed their appreciation for Dick and Barbara's hospitality by dancing at a picnic at Lowland Farm. The picnic guest list grew by itself, minute by minute it seemed, until Barbara found herself feeding seventy five visitors as well as enjoying the entertainment.

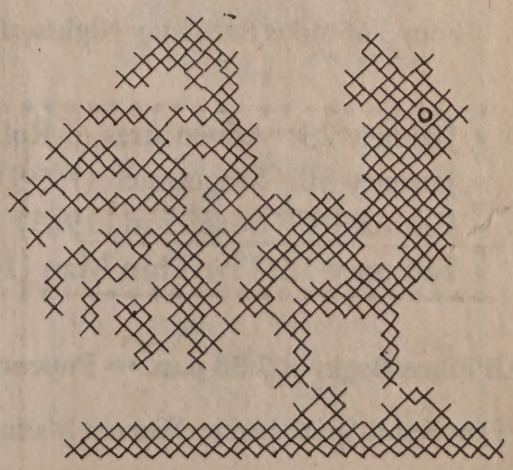
One of the dancers stayed on at the cottage to make sure that all was left in good order. During supper at Lowland Farm the next night, he spied the sampler on the dining room wall.

"I do that in music," he said. And for the first time the Tryons' heard the old English ballad called "Farmers' Arms".

Farmers' Arms
(From the sampler at Lowland Farm.)

All our trust is in God
Let the wealthy and great
Roll in splendor and state.
I envy them not.
I declare it.
I eat my own lamb,
my own chickens and ham
I shear my own fleece
and I wear it.
I have lawns. I have bowers.
I have fruits. I have flowers.
The lark is my morning alarmer.
So jolly boys now
Here's God speed the plow.
Long life and success to the farmer.

— MaryKate Jordan



EAGLE FEATHERS

On two different occasions during the last six months the School Committee has heard from our World Language Department leader, Catherine Elliott, about developments in her department and about plans to research the possibility of starting an elementary world language study program in the Southern Berkshire District. During each of her presentations to the School Committee, Catherine has reflected the many excellent, professional qualities that she brings to her Southern Berkshire assignment. Catherine is a first rate instructor who works very hard and sincerely to help her students develop their skills and knowledge in the French language. Not one to shortcut in her teaching, the French language sessions that I have observed have been positively demanding with respect to student preparation and participation. Students have considerable difficulty "hiding-out" in French class, and their opportunity to master the language is enhanced as a result.

Catherine's approach to the Teacher Leader's role has mirrored her good work as a classroom instructor. She is determined to make the World Language Programs at Mt. Everett, and eventually in the elementary schools, as well, of world class caliber. An Eagle Feather to Madame Elliott for setting the pace for Southern Berkshire in World Language study.

Update on Home-School Students. At one of the summer sessions of the School Committee, John Peron and Glenn Devoti outlined the procedures now being followed in the elementary and high school offices to comply with the state-mandated obligation placed upon local school districts to oversee the home-school efforts of parents living in the five district towns. These are parents who elect to provide education services for their children in the home or other settings not approved as schools by the state. With the full-fledged development of a state curriculum and standard tests designed to chart the progress of students in the approved courses of study, it is felt that more needs to be done in addressing our quality control function with home-schoolers.

The first steps have been taken to make sure that all home-school students are duly registered with the school by the parents. Almost all of the school age youngsters known to be living in the district and not enrolled in a school—here or elsewhere—have been identified, and home study plans have been outlined by parents. Some of the more reluctant families were persuaded to register when it became clear that it was the district's intention to report unregistered home-schoolers as truant to state authorities in due course. It is likely that such an action will be necessary with the uncooperative souls at some point.

Having an approved study plan or curriculum to follow is the first obligation that a home-school parent must meet. The evaluation of progress, term to term, is a very important aspect of the responsibility of the parent, in conjunction with our principals or their designees. We offer the California Aptitude Test (CAT) at school in those grades where such is administered each year, but the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) program is off-limits as far as home-schoolers are concerned. Portfolio assessments remain the most common evaluation tool at this point.

The School Committee's policy on its interaction with the home-school approval process is considerably more involved than our practice has allowed. We do need to update the Committee on the full scope of the home-school population of the district towns, and we'll do that in lists to be distributed in the winter term. The Policy Subcommittee will also be looking at the current policy/practice in this area and seeking to streamline the process without cutting anyone off from important information.

MCAS Test Results. The long awaited MCAS test results were received in the district on December 2 and 4. Catherine Town, director of testing, has been working hard with the principals, guidance staff and teacher leaders to analyze the Southern Berkshire scores as they compare with state averages and those from neighboring districts. The district numbers are low, but not alarmingly so when compared with the state averages or with the results posted by other Berkshire County Districts. The comparison that will matter most to Southern Berkshire residents who care about the public school scene will be the one with Berkshire Hills. With the exception of a very disappointing showing by grade four students in the language arts area, most of the Southern Berkshire results are in league with the area districts. Southern Berkshire and every district in the state has a long way to go with curriculum alignment and preparation generally, if the MCAS standard is to be met in the near future.

Transitions. As previously reported, Cliff Love has resigned his assignment as one-on-one paraprofessional to a middle school student. Mrs. Jane Wright has been

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transferred to that assignment, and Ms. Sylvia Vadakin has been hired to take on Jane's former elementary special needs assignment.

The winter sports coaches are as follows: Boys' Basketball, Jesse Carpenter, Varsity, and Jay Feldman, JV; Girls' Basketball, Dennis Caesar, Varsity, and Robin Bennett, JV; Hockey, Arthur Batacchi and Rick Janusz; Wrestling, David Lupiani, Head Coach, and Daniel Lanoue, Assistant; Cheerleading, Brenda Ullrich.

Massachusetts Department Of Education Reserve Fund..aka.." Pothole Grant." The district's request for a third straight year of support from the DOE's Pothole Fund yielded $150,000 of much needed funds for maintenance projects that have been in the deferred category because of the enormous budget constraints of the last two years. The FY'99 grant, developed in large measure because of the generous assistance of Senator Nuciforo, who took our case to the state officials and was quite successful in convincing same about the tattered condition of the SBRSD treasury. No doubt the case was further assisted by the aversion that certain DOE officials have to the prospect of another midwinter visit to the hinterlands of Massachusetts. The MADOE would be most pleased to see the present assessment dilemma solved without the need for direct intervention from a state agency or court.

The *string* attached to the $150,000 state grant requires settlement of the assessment controversy by June 1. One might conclude that the MADOE will follow through with enforcing the "assessment caveat" because the District has been given more consideration that usual with respect to reserve account grants lately.

— Dr. William Cooper
Superintendent, SBRSD

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THIN ICE

On Saturday, December 26, George Vachon, a seventy three-year-old ice-fisherman from Springfield, drowned when he fell through the ice on Lake Garfield. According to reports in the Berkshire Eagle, Vachon spent at least thirty minutes underwater before divers from the Monterey Fire and Rescue squad could locate him in the weeds approximately ten feet below the surface of the water.

Meanwhile, a scant ten minutes away on Benedict Pond in Beartown State Forest, thirty or more skaters were happily racing around unaware of the tragic accident. All they knew was that this was some of the finest skating ice that this town had ever seen.

On Tuesday, December 29, the Eagle ran the headline "Warning: Ice isn't safe yet." The article goes on to quote Monterey Fire Chief Ray Tryon about the danger of "taking chances with thin ice." So what's the deal here? Is it time to strap on the blades or does the prudent sports person heed the warnings in the paper? The answer is a resounding "Yes!" to both options.

Veteran skaters Jim Thomas and Mick Burns were helpful in clearing up this confusing array of circumstances. First and foremost it is imperative to know the water course of a potential skating pond. Where does the water flow in and out of the pond? If spring fed, where are the springs located? Where are the deepest parts of the lake? These are all places where the ice will not freeze as easily and will tend to be thinner.

Jim Thomas related a cautionary tale about falling through the ice at Lake Garfield. A few years ago he skated out on the ice from the Town Beach, not realizing that there is an active water flow to a culvert and across the street to Brewer Pond. Jim fell through the ice. Luckily he quickly swam and crawled out. He said that he went right to his car—didn't even take off his skates—and drove home. He was lucky to be alive, and he admitted that at the time he really didn't know enough about Lake Garfield to have been skating on it.

Mick Burns reported that he had not known about the recent tragedy on Lake Garfield, and had been skating on *a section* of the lake for several days. He contends that, having grown up on Lake Garfield, he knows the lake quite well. "Where I was skating it is not more than three or four feet deep, and the ice was at least three inches thick. People asked me not to take chances, but I feel that I know the lake really well so I don't feel like I am taking chances."

In addition to being familiar with the lake or pond, it is also important to know how to check the ice. According to the Reader's Digest book *Back to Basics*, in the chapter "Outdoors in Winter," ice that is two inches thick is unsafe for general use, ice that is three inches thick is considered safe, and ice that is four inches thick is safe for all people and "general pedestrian use."

Benedict Pond is at a higher elevation than Lake Garfield and thus subject to colder temperatures; it may freeze sooner than other lakes and ponds. Jim Thomas reported that when he went to look at the ice at Benedict Pond, it was four inches thick everywhere he checked. Ice can be checked using either an ice auger or an ice chopper, which looks like a crowbar with an end for chopping. Other important things to remember are to *never* check the ice alone, *always bring a buddy*, and always have a ladder, a tree limb, or some other long implement to help someone should they fall through the ice. Whatever you bring it needs to be long enough to reach someone without the rescuer going through the ice as well.

Like many winter sports, going out on the ice does pose some hazards but these can be minimized by taking the proper precautions. **If there is any doubt, don't go out.** Even if you are not concerned about your own life, think about the fact that you are also endangering the lives those who would have to rescue you.

— Maggie Leonard

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-- Matthew Breuer, a Roadside regular

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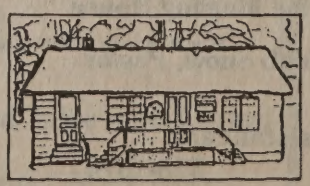

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MY FATHER, THE CHURCH, AND GOD

When Dad died a few weeks ago, I started rambling around in my heart. You see, Dad had been a Methodist minister for nearly forty-five years. He started in the ministry after giving up on being a wire-drawer in Heckmondwike, England in the late 1930's. For reasons that I never understood, he decided that God had called him to do something different. But there was a catch to this call: while studying for the ministry he could not get married. But he wanted to get married, so he (and my mother) emigrated to the United States. He and Mom ended up in the Adirondacks in the middle of the Depression. A few years later they moved to Pittsfield by way of Hampton, NY. Mom was an ardent nationalist (she never became a U.S. citizen) and decided that I must be carried and born in her native England. This was the beginning of a relationship with my parents, the Christian Church, and God that could be best characterized as having more heat than light.

Dad had these ideas about God that got in the way of being a father. I don't know where those "God-ideas" came from. But they, along with his Victorian upbringing, effectively squelched any warmth of personality. He was kind and helpful in a proper sort of way, but this spirit seemed to arise more out of a commandment from God than any genuine feeling on his part. There wasn't much if any spontaneity. To him God was defined by ideas, the institutional church, and its rituals and teachings. I knew that in order to be in Dad's favor I needed to be a member of his congregation. This took precedence over being his son, and our relationship was circumscribed by rules and rituals that were more a product of religious catechism than of the heart. Within that environment it was easy to assume a dogmatic, intolerant, and judgmental attitude. And it could all be done under the auspices of the Christian Church and God. Self-righteousness and sarcasm soon become the daily tools for living and relating. It's amazing how quickly weak and insecure egos pick up on those tools, refine them, and confuse them for God's will.

It was only after Dad retired from the professional ministry that he became more human to me. (There is life after the ministry.) I was his son, a member of the family, and not simply a member of his congregation. He still did not know how to say "I love you." His cultural and religious upbringing was still calling the shots. It was only during the latter years of his life that he was able to admit that we need to say those words to one another more often. He would respond to my saying "I love you, Dad," with an uncomfortable laugh and say "And I love you, too, Keith."

Well, Dad is dead and buried and I am asking myself, "What I am doing with that legacy?" The Victorian culture of my parents is still at play in my emotional and spiritual life. I, too, have chosen to be a professional minister (although with considerable ambivalence). The institutional Christian Church, with all its dogmatic and self-serving pronouncements of what it thinks God thinks is right and wrong, has also been the womb in which I have been nurtured. At times I am appalled with how I have inflicted some of the same damage on my daughters under the guise of being God's servant. Yet it's also amazing how I have rebelled against much that I witnessed in Dad's life and ministry. However I realize that it is so easy to fall back into the old habits of intolerance and judgment, especially when I become insecure and uncomfortable with people and ideas. And all in the name of God, too. That's almost an unbeatable combination. Which is why I have had such a difficult time relating to my father, to the Church, and to God. It is a very messy situation. Perhaps that is a good way to describe the human predicament.

Then, again, Dad and I did learn how to say to each other "I love you."

— Keith Snow, Pastor
Monterey United Church of Christ

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RINK OPENS FOR ELEVENTH SEASON

The skating rink in the pavilion behind the Firehouse opened for business on December 31, one of our latest opening dates. It was just in time for a few hardy families to brave the ten degree weather and hold their New Year's eve party on the ice. This year promises to be a good skating season. We have several inches of ice on the rink, enough to withstand the occasional warm spell. Last year we had exactly three skating days on the rink.

The Parks Department invested $900 in a custom-made liner for the ice rink this year. This liner should allow the water to stay on the rink even if the ice melts in a major warm spell. In the past when the ice melted the water would run out of the rink leaving patches of bare pavement. Then it would take many hours of spraying to cover them up, only to have the pavement reappear on the next warm day. The liner would have saved hundreds of hours of work and extended the skating season.

Why do I say "would have?" Unfortunately persons unknown ignored several "Rink Closed" signs posted at the rink, and skated before the ice was ready. The skating sliced the liner in multiple places, and it means that we will be facing the same old problems again this year if we have a thaw. The holes in the liner allow water to escape under the liner which pushes it up toward the ice surface where it will get even more cut up. I fear the liner will be completely ruined.

The point here is to please follow the signs at the rink. Closed means **closed** to all. No hockey means **no hockey** at all. Hard, regulation pucks are forbidden at all times. There is a bucket of foam pucks at the rink for all to use. Rink hours are as follows:

Mon.-Fri.: Public skating until 3 p.m.—no hockey.
Mon.-Fri.: Hockey 3-5 p.m.
Sat.-Sun.: Hockey 9 a.m.-noon and 3-5 p.m.
Sat.-Sun.: Public skating noon-3 p.m.
Sat. night public skating 7-9 p.m.

— Jim Thomas
Parks Department

TENTH ANNUAL MONTEREY CUP

The Tenth Annual Monterey Cup Hockey Tournament is slated for Saturday, January 30, weather permitting. The tournament features six local teams playing in a round-robin format that leads to a playoff round, and finally the cup championship. Players are of varying abilities, and teams are ranked by a handicap system designed specifically for the tournament to keep the games close. For example, a team with less experienced players may start their game against a more experienced team with two points (i.e. 2-0).

The Monterey Cup is an all-day affair beginning at 10 a.m. and ending around 3 p.m. Everyone is invited to come and join the party and watch the fun. Free hot coffee and hot cocoa are available and a fire is kept burning all day. You might be surprised who plays in this tournament—there are many who have no experience outside of the Monterey rink, but the competition is still fierce!

— Jim Thomas

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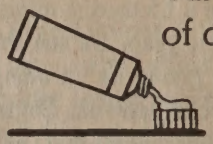
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WILDLIFE SURVEY

There was a striking pause in our progression into winter: two weeks of Indian summer at the end of November and the beginning of December. The early mornings felt like spring with moist mild air, woodpeckers signaling in Morse code and nuthatches singing their rapid "whi, whi, whi, whi, whi." Insects were out: a few moths were fluttering about and a few forsythia buds were beguiled into opening.

Some aberrant behavior on the side of tameness: on December 7 a bear in the 200 pound class stood his ground about fifty yards from Dale Duryea, then walked calmly off into the woods by Brett Road; two ravens patrolled the lawn twenty feet from the McAllester house at dawn December 4; a fox, who has a regular beat across the Banners' yard, seemed about to sniff noses with their dog, Tina, in early December, when a noise frightened him away; two months ago a light brown animal that seemed to be in the weasel family, more than a foot long, ran in and out of Alan Goldfarb's studio, behind the Roadside Store. It scurried about, hopped, got up on its hind legs and came in and out three times before Alan closed the door so he could go back to work. A year ago there was a thump by Alan's window and he saw a bluejay hovering about. When he opened the door for a better look the jay flew right in and perched on the head of one of Alan's sculptures where he deposited a dropping. Alan put part of his sandwich on the floor and the bird pecked at it. It stayed around for three days and "made the people at the Roadside store nervous." Alan believes the bird must have been somebody's pet.

Other sightings by Alan: a bobcat on December 11 crossing the lawn in front of the studio at 3:30 in the afternoon. It darted off into the woods behind the building when Alan stepped out; three years ago: moose in the field by Curtis Road; from time to time a coyote trotting along the road towards Great Barrington, and a couple of times on Curtis Road; a porcupine near the bus stop on Curtis Road.

Birds flocking. The great flocks of geese have gone south, but smaller birds are still flocking in this region. Most notable have been large numbers of starlings swooping over the town and congregating on the telephone wires along Barnum's Flats. Quite a few ducks and geese have lingered on Lake Garfield through the unusually warm weather. Early in the morning on December 4, I saw twenty one cedar waxwings in the trees over the beaver pond at the east end of Lake Garfield. They were darting up into the air after the unseasonably late insects there. The Duryeas' saw a small flock of robins, together, on their lawn.

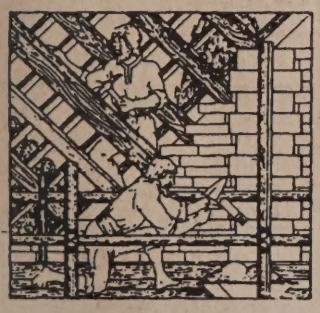
From the Banners on Griswold Road. There is a "pod" of black squirrels in that section of Monterey. They are like our usual grays, but very dark. Black squirrels were first reported in the *News* a dozen years ago. They were thought to have escaped from a zoo in Springfield. Over the years they have been seen getting closer to the western part of the state and we have had other sightings in Monterey.

There is a beaver community in the swampy area along Art School Road, west of the junction with Griswold Road. Residents have noted that the swamp has gone from soggy to watery in the last year or so.

From the Duryeas' on Main Road. Anna saw a red-tail hawk near the Butternut Ski Area in the second week of December. Dale has seen otter tracks "everywhere", at the beaver pond near Brett Road, in early December. A deer hunter told him he'd seen a bobcat near the Thieriot farm. A predator caught up with a partridge on the Thorn property: "there were feathers all over the place."

Ice moving in. The small ponds have been freezing over and thawing again, but now it may have come to stay for the winter. When the ice was thin it gave a tintinabulary response when small stones were bounced on it but now there's a deeper resonance and some ponds will bear a person's weight. On December 14 the big lakes were frozen halfway across.

— David P. McAllester



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SESTINA

A soft scented cocoon, my feathery bed;
outside there's snow. Tucked in, I dream
of darting white-tailed deer, and then I'm up
with birdsong, face the dawning day at ease.
As nearby woods emerge from silent sleep,
the newly-risen sun announces morning time.

Sharp icicles have hardened in the time
I slept, throw dagger-shadows on the bed.
I'm basking in the warmth that let me sleep,
the past day's calm that kept my dream
benign, feel body's balm that lets me ease
into chilling air when I get up.

I watch through lightly frosted window, up
high in branches gnarled and bent with time,
two large gray squirrels who leap with ease
from tree to tree. For them no warming bed
of down; Who knows—do squirrels ever dream?
assuming even that they really sleep.

Content beneath the snow nascent flowers sleep.
It will be Springtime when these buds wake up.
As though to validate my last night's dream,
two frisky deer arrive. I 've wakened just in time
to catch them prancing past the frozen flower bed.
Their tracks in deepened snow are seen with ease.

Back in the brittle city, I'm ill at ease,
and hardly ever get a full night's sleep.
I wake up wired, jumping out of bed,
rushing, brooding, soon feel all used up.
My heart (Type A) keeps racing double time.
I'm tossing nightly in a painful dream.

To stay this drastic pace, I daydream
of the country life; this often helps to ease
my agitated mood. (Even thinking of that time
a bat swooped down right near me during sleep,
I'm calm.) Those images can't help but cheer me up.
The woods, the icicles, the deer, the soft down bed.

Reprieved! Each time my discontent heats up,
the recollected dream returns me to that bed
—as though I might still sleep in total ease.

— Edwin Schur
(originally appeared in Fauquier Poetry Journal)

CONCEPTION

Ten thousand days are brushed into a can
And sprinkled on a garden
As God wallows on teh sides of back roads.

The frame strangles the picture.

— Peter Shepley

FEAR

Fear is a little animal.
DonÕt try to kill it.
Get down on your hands and knees.
Look it in the eye.

— Peter Shepley

IN THE ABSENCE OF A POET

Across the moors
The wind cuts low.
A cold blade
Over the sere grass.
Shifting, searching,
Allowing no warmth or shelter.
A desolate voice
Keening for a companion

There is no answer.
He is gone.
The vessel is broken
Passion is spilled,
Swallowed
In the grinding embrace
Of earth, rock and water

The resonance of memory
Fades,
A waning echo
In this bleak beauty,
This hard majesty
Now just a ruin of savage splendor,
Without a witness

Shafts of the last sun
Pierce the grey, tattered veil.
Flat, chill gold
Stabs the clouds,
Strikes the barrows hunched silent.
Probes the gloom
Of the crumbled dolmen-rings.
Shadow-chapels,
Tumbled voids of worship.
The shattered, sacred places
Where gods and demons,
Huddled amid the stones,
Whimper like children in the dark
That no one hears

For now
No one does

— Nick Hardcastle

SNOW IN THE CITY

When the first snow comes in the woods we experience the magic of light reversal: suddenly, instead of the sky being the brightest pole of our universe, drawing us, it is the ground which lifts us, propels us. I have been waiting for this moment, this upheaval which usually comes about now at the darkest time of the year. Imagine my surprise when my magic moment came this season, not here in the woods and clearings of Monterey and not even outdoors, really. My first transforming white flurries and outlines of landscape, snow defining peoples' shoulders like epaulets and making their hair suddenly exotically white, came in the city—and it came indoors!

The city is a marvelous place: I went indoors and the rain stopped, but it began to snow. I saw horses, donkeys, 120-year old Spaniards speaking French. I saw smugglers in the Pyrenees where the snow began, brave picadors and matadors and gypsy women smoking cigarettes and reading their fortunes in cards. I saw a soldier, who fairly gushed with filial love and regimental loyalty, throw it all away for a dancing mezzo-soprano who spoke in conundrums and loved a matador. I saw a murder.

This was New York! I drove there early in December, the last car in a caravan of three from the Berkshires. We were mothers, daughters, a son, a husband and an experienced guide. This was the Berkshire Children's Chorus' 1998 trip to the Met to see Carmen, a show we all knew well because we'd rehearsed it, lived and breathed it, and in the case of the kids, sung in it in September with the Berkshire Opera Company at Tanglewood. Now we were off to Lincoln Center to see the Metropolitan Opera's production of our show.

Picture us setting off. Picture us getting set to set off: I have only been to an opera once before in my life, which was Carmen at Tanglewood. I get it that this is different, outfit-wise. I am counting on finding something in the attic garment bags, which contain my mother's fancy clothes, which I have inherited. She could dress for the Met without batting an eye. I am counting on her to see me through this, though I know deep down inside I will have to wear my own shoes.

Cora has no problem. She has the blooming beauty of a confident twelve-year-old, plus a rack full of bright silk scarves. She chooses a dark blue skirt, black top, blue batik vest with silver buttons—and the pale blue and silver silk boa from San Francisco.

I finally slide into Mom's shiny red shirt (blouse) made of some material that did not grow on a farm and velvet pantaloons straight out of the Arabian Nights, in red and gold. Sudi has gone off to her riding lesson and left out her lipstick and blush, for me ("no pressure, Mom—just if you want it"). I look in the mirror at me in Mom's clothes. I pick up the lipstick and speak to her, "Guide my hand!"

We go. I remind myself not to touch my face, my mouth, no matter how much they may tickle or itch. They are now smudgeable. Thus constrained, I line up at the rendezvous point and the rain begins. I put on the wipers and we head south. I must not get separated from my two guide cars because I am the one who absolutely could not find Lincoln Center in Manhattan—not without a topo map and compass.

Route 22, NY: the lead car runs a yellow light, number two is red in the intersection, and I stop, of course. I have lost them! Not until we reach I-684 do I get a chance to risk a speeding ticket and catch up to my guides. All seven of us in my car are peering through the bleary windshield (remember the rain? the darkness?) to find the guides. Now I vow I will not be left behind again. "Close the gap" becomes our motto whenever we approach a light, but in spite of this I run four red lights before we hit the Lincoln Center parking garage! This is more crimes and misdemeanors than I have committed behind the wheel my entire driving life. The rain has stopped. We leave our hats and umbrellas in the cars and stroll through the bright lights of the parking garage, warm and self-congratulatory—until we walk outdoors to get to the restaurant. It is pouring! How can this be? When we got out of the cars it had stopped, we protest. Oh yes, some kid realizes, we were indoors.

A dinner, a toast, a sip of gin, and we are off through the puddles to pose before the lights of the Lincoln Center piazza. Lee left her camera at home but then *bought* one at a drug store, just for this moment. In we go, twenty of us, to our family circle seats. We slip out of our coats, unsheathe our binoculars and get ready. Nancy has told us there is a special moment coming, but we are already gaga over the chandeliers like elongate crystal

Illus. by Frederick Banbery, 1965. A Treasury of Grand Opera, by Henry W. Simon.

clusters, the ceiling like marine patterns in gold, the Chagall paintings in the lobby. We know in a minute the band will start up with that rousing parade music we know so well, the fanfare that brought tears to our eyes every time in September. We are ready to say goodbye to the present time and place, to be swept away by music, by love and excitement, by sets by Zeffirelli.

Then Nancy's "moment" arrives. Long ropes from the ceiling, descending so far below our crow's nest seats that we have not even known (or wondered) what was at the bottom, pull silently up, up until from below us come more lit chandeliers, like glowing ice crystals. They float up past us, right in front of us and on up to the ancient marine-patterned gold ceiling, taking us with them as they dim. The cymbals crash and our transportation is complete. Through the red lights that said "stop" (but we did not stop!), to the place we could never have found (but here we are), up and up all those stairs (past the usher who fingered Cora's boa and said, "snazzy!") right to the top to the bustling street in Seville, 120 years ago in a heartbeat to the timeless past of the human condition: love, jealousy, destiny, soldiers, smugglers, horses, kids, and death. Ah, opera!

— Bonner McAllester

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THE FAMILY NETWORK/ CHILDREN'S HEALTH, INC.

The Family Network is located at 940 South Main Street, Great Barrington: call 528-0721 for more information. All activities are at the Family Center, unless otherwise noted.

Some winter playtime hints. Hide and seek—a different way. When the children are stuck inside on an inclement day, try this type of hide and seek. Get a stuffed animal or some other appropriate toy to hide. The seekers can close their eyes or be in another room. Be sure part of the item is showing a little bit.

Keep toys ready to use, easy to put away. Open shelves are best. A child should be able to reach toys without help and also be able to put them away. You can help your child decide where each toy should belong. You can also help the child understand categories: blocks, cars and trains, balls, books, etc. For younger children, you can put a picture of the toys in each category near the place to be stored. For older children, you can print the name of the toy category near the picture. Putting toys away can be a learning game. For instance, you can say, "Let's put all the red toys away first." or, "Put all the light toys away", or "Put all the little toys away," etc. It is also helpful to reduce the number of toys in use at one time. Ask the child to put away one toy before using the next.

Great Barrington Parents Anonymous is looking for new members. Parents who want to discuss problems they have with their children are encouraged to call Jim Monsonis at 528-4863 for more information. The group meets at Simon's Rock College on Thursday evenings from 7:30-9 p.m. Free childcare is available. Parents can also call 1-800-882-1250 for Parents Anonymous information.

Volunteers needed for the clothing and toy exchange. Please call the Family Center in Great Barrington to volunteer.

We are seeking parents who would like to be part of the Advisory Board of Family Network. If you would like more information, pleâse call Claudette Callahan at 528-0721.

Drop in times at Great Barrington site, Mondays and Fridays, noon-2 p.m. and Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 3-5 p.m.; Thursdays, 10 a.m.-noon. For other times, please call to make an appointment.

Otis site, Town Hall, second floor, Thursdays, 10 a.m.-noon.

Play and Learn Group for three and four year olds, every Monday and Friday, 9-11 a.m. Registration is required.

Mother-Baby Exercise Class, every Tuesday 8:30 a.m. Pre-registration is required and childcare will be provided.

English As A Second Language, (ESL) every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. and every Friday at noon-2 p.m. Childcare will be provided. Please call to register.

Parent-Child Playgroups, every Wednesday and Thursday at 9:30-11:30 a.m. at the Family Center in Great Barrington. For playgroup schedule in other sites please call the Family Center.

January Calendar of Events.

January 1, Family Network closed for the holiday.

January 11, Father-Child Activity, winter picnic—held indoors, 5:30 p.m.

January 12, Licensed Day Care Providers group, 7 p.m. Using time creatively and constructively led by Stacie Supranowicz.

January 13, Family Network Advisory Board meeting, 12:30 p.m., a light lunch will be provided.

January 14, Parent-Infant drop-in, Baby Massage with Vicki Guy, 1 p.m.

January 19 and 20, CPR For Infants and Toddlers, led by Marsha Harvey, RN, 6 p.m.

January 23, Father-Child Field Trip to Gould Farm in Monterey to see animals and sleighride (snow needed). Meet at the Red Barns at 10 a.m.

January 25, Parents Without Partners meeting, discuss future activities, 5:30 p.m. There will be a light supper and childcare will be provided.

January 27, New Year luncheon for families with 1998 births, St. Peter's Center on East Street, Great Barrington, noon. Volunteers are needed for childcare. Snow date is January 28.

January 30, Parent-Child story time and activities led by Gretchen Courage. Each child will receive a free book and story bag, 10:30 a.m.

BRIDGES AND BACKWATERS

Profiles of the country bridges of Monterey are a study of a variety of structures. Some are wood platforms where waters pass through stone portals, and wildlife is drawn to the crossroads of earth, water, and winter sky. If rippling water could sing the praises for building such a bridge at Rawson Brook, the chorus would stem from the geological downspouts of the old mill site on Wallace Hall Road.

Once through the portals of the bridge the water would run to the rivers and take up it's race to the sea, if it's passage was not waylaid by the labor of the beavers. The constructions of nature's engineers delay the completion of the water's journey and take us back in time.

To calibrate a high-water mark of historical significance, the environmental clock might be turned back to before the "Beaver Wars" of the seventeenth century. Indian tribes fought territorial wars for the privilege of trapping and trading pelts until the source of "brown gold" virtually dried up.

Now there is a resurgence of beaver activity. The felling of trees and weaving of branches into dams reinforced with a mortar of mud, has caused the rising waters to reverse direction and seek their own levels while widening wetlands, and reclaiming the woodlands to an extent not seen for hundreds of years.

If beavers clog human culverts to a fault, their return may benefit other species such as amphibians, water fowl, warm water fish, otters, minks, and herons. To the indigenous Algonquins the stalking figure of a great blue heron fishing at the edge of a marsh represented an uncanny living spirit of the backwaters. If the largest of the herons (affectionately called the "great blue" by James Audubon) was the ultimate fisherman to Native Americans, their ultimate predator was the red-tailed hawk (as illustrated). This bird was admired for its keen vision, skillful soaring, and ability to get into position to stoop upon its prey. To Native Americans this raptor was known as "the red hunter."

Now that the calendar year of 1998 is water under the bridge, our daylight hours are faint and spaced far apart. The solar heartbeat upon the earth lowers like the slower basal metabolic rate of a hibernating animal. Many fur-bearing creatures spend the days hidden away in hollow trees, leafy culverts, burrows, or dens. Beaver lodges and muskrat houses are sealed under a thermal layer of ice.

A prolonged hush at evening
As the earth begins sleeping
It falls off at the edge of lowlands
Where waters are freezing.

Writing and illustration by
— George Emmons.

GOULD FARM

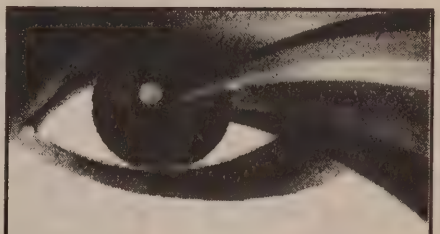
Editor's note: This article is an example of one person's experience at Gould Farm. Although not the usual fare of the Monterey News, the evolution of the author from despair to hope is powerful and deserves publication. This piece has been reproduced exactly as submitted.

silence fills my world in the most unlikely place of silence. i sit in my cell contemplating the last four months i have spent locked up from the outside world. in those months i have turned twenty one, seen thanksgiving, Christmas, and a new year all inside these same old prison walls. i have become a number, a useless con. the only thing i have to look forward to is a place called gould farm, which is somewhere in the corner of massachusetts. a voice from nowhere crackles for jeremy martin to get his stuff. his time has come to leave these forbidden walls. a reprieve, a crack of sunlight i haven't seen in months. i walk down the narrow halls to the gate of my freedom. after checking if i was the real person supposed to leave, a guard walks me to the outside world. now i am free. should i run, cry, laugh, shout. i do none except leave, a grin from ear to ear. my parents are there to take me to the farm. after saying a prayer to the god of all travel, we set out for my new home. a place without walls, a place to dream. we turn off route 23 at a sign that says gould farm. after we pull around the big farm house, we get out to be greeted by a man with long hair and a beard. he says hello and says that his name is oren. immediately he takes us for a tour. we walk down the main road which looks like it has been patched through and through. we check out the barn that was raised in one day. just like the one by our house in pennsylvania. the newborn calf is there to greet us. life! all cornered in this small piece of heaven. i get settled in mckee house which will be my home for the next year.

gould farm is known for rehabilitating people with mental illness and also those who say they are normal. guest are thought to be staff and vice versa. there is no stigma on this farm. all are welcomed. people come and people go but the spirit remains. i have found many different ideas and opinions, but always backed with love for one another. i've seen progress in so many people. i've seen life and death and everything in between. i've seen winter which brings maple syrup to our table and the summer for hikes and swims. vegetables in the fall along with trees of every imaginable color, and animals coming and going in all seasons. since i have been on the farm i have experienced many things and have learned many different skills. i've seen many a sage, a couple of prophets, and many aspiring saints. all which flow with reverence to life and love.

i have moved along now to a sister house close to boston. i've been here a week and i have already used skills i learned at the farm. i know a new freedom, one without prejudices and one with no imposing walls. i hope to spend these holidays not with barred doors but one with people i love, knowing that god calls all of us to commune with him forever.

— Hans Martin



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SENATOR SAYS

For the upcoming 1999-2000 legislative session, I am sponsoring and co-sponsoring important legislation focusing on healthcare, economic development, education, community and historic preservation, and cultural facilities. The following are some of the bills included in my legislative agenda for the upcoming session.

Medical Records Privacy and Patient Confidentiality Bill. This bill gives important protections for patient confidentiality and privacy. The objective of this particular legislation is to ensure that where personal information is to be disclosed or used, only essential and directly related information shall be revealed. Anyone receiving such information shall be responsible for protecting the patient's privacy. The bill requires informed consent before any identified information is released or used and requires an audit trail of anyone who has access to a patient's medical file. The bill creates civil and criminal penalties for violations of privacy.

Low Speed/Low Volume Bridges. This bill would require the Massachusetts Highway Department to work with local highway superintendents and other interested parties to establish appropriate standards for the design of bridges which meet low speed and low volume roadway criteria. The new standards will lead to a more sensitive approach to roadway reconstruction on roads in rural areas and small towns, while saving on materials and construction costs. In 1997, the Mass Highway Department issued new standards for low speed/low volume roadways. These standards provided for reduced travel lanes and shoulder width on roadways, but did not make corresponding reductions for bridges which serve these low speed/low volume routes.

Telecommunications Tower Siting. I have also filed a bill to remove wireless telecommunication providers from the definition of public service corporations. Currently, wireless telecommunications are defined as public service corporations and are therefore allowed to apply to the Department of Telecommunications and Energy for exemption from city and town zoning by-laws and ordinances when siting a telecommunications tower. Under the new law, local statutes could not be by-passed.

An Act Relative to Establishing Old Growth Forest Preserves. Old growth forests are scattered throughout my district. Many of the trees in old growth forests are between 250 and 300 years old. This bill directs the Secretary of Environmental Affairs to conduct an inventory on the status, age, and composition of forested lands owned by the Commonwealth. I would also instruct the Executive office of Environmental Affairs to adopt protective measures to ensure the preservation of these natural areas.

— Senator Andrea F. Nuciforo, Jr.

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REP RAP

I would like to take the opportunity to wish all of you a very happy New Year and best wishes for a prosperous 1999! This is the time of year when we hit the ground running at the State House, with thousands of new bills filed for the term. As the 1999-2000 legislative session gets under way, my priority for the term is to work for the passage of health maintenance organization (HMO) reform. I have signed on to cosponsor this piece of legislation that will advocate for patients concerns. Nowadays health care is being driven not so much by medical decisions but by profit motives. The bill filed addresses the outcry over services offered by HMOs and the claims payment methods.

Provisions of the bill include payment by the HMO for emergency care deemed reasonable by a prudent layperson, and permits individuals to hold HMOs legally responsible for denying a patient medically necessary and appropriate care and treatment. The proposal also creates an Office of Managed Care Oversight to provide independent review panels and an appeal process for plan members who have exhausted their plan's internal process. This office would also offer consumers a "health plan report card" and provide additional information and access to consumers about health plans. Most importantly the bill removes HMOs' "charitable immunity" status which limits their liability to $20,000. The plan mandates that HMOs are not to be considered charities, but instead are liable to the same limitations that apply to physicians. Finally the bill improves access for specialty care by allowing a patient to receive a standing referral from his or her primary care provider. Currently repeated referrals are needed for visits to doctors other than primary care physicians.

I have also cosponsored a bill expanding the senior pharmacy program to assist people that are facing a cap on their prescription drug benefits through their Medicare health maintenance organizations. The expanded program will offer drug coverage up to $1,500 after a cap has been reached. It will be available to seniors and people with disabilities who are 200% below the federal poverty level. The expansion will be funded by an increase in the cigarette tax. The increased funding for this program will enable elders to have access to needed prescriptions without making difficult choices on whether to pay a heating bill or pay for their medicine.

I pledge to fight for both these matters in the upcoming year. If you should have any questions regarding this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact my full time district office at (413)243-0289.

— Rep. Christopher J. Hodgkins

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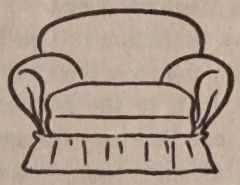

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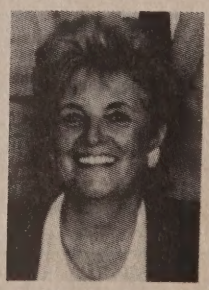

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THE WRITE STUFF

The *Monterey News* is sponsoring an essay contest and we want to hear from you write now! Feel free to wax eloquent over your real or imagined acts of derring-do in the **Winter Heroics** essay contest. Submitted work will be judged in the following age groups: twelve years and under; thirteen to sixteen years; and an open class for "kids" of all ages. The winner in each category will receive a a twenty dollar gift certificate to The Bookloft, as well as having their story published in the *Monterey News*.

Essays may be fiction or non-fiction and should not exceed 300 words. Please submit work to the *Monterey News* no later than February fifteenth. Entries should be sent to Essay contest, Monterey News, P.O. Box 9, Monterey, MA 01245.

— Maggie Leonard

PERSONAL NOTES

JANUARY

Birthday greetings go out to **Don Welsch** on January 3, to **Joshua Gardner** on January 4, to **Barbara Tryon** on January 5, to **Spencer Pope** on January 9, to **Cindy Hebert** on January 10, to **Jim Deloy** on January 11, to **Julian Mendel** and **Nadine Stoner** on January 13, to **Bridget Mendel** on January 15, to **Laura Dinan** on January 22, to **Shelly Bynack** on January 26, and to **Andrew Gardner** on January 27.

Happy Anniversary to **Karl** and **Shirley Quisenberry** on January 1, to **Don** and **Carol Welsch** on January 5, to **Rick** and **Debbie Mielke** on January 9, and to **Rod** and **Jeri Palmer** on January 23.

Monument Mountain Regional High School has just announced its honor roll for the first quarter. Congratulations to **Maggie Clawson** and **Mariah Rutherford-Olds**, who achieved high honors in grade ten, and **Lauren Goldfinger** and **James Hall**, also in tenth grade, who were awarded honors.

Mount Everett also released its first quarter honor roll. Congratulations to **Katherine Vallianos** who earned high honors in grade ten, and to **Christina Vallianos** for her high honors in grade seven. Honors students include **Shanna Hamm** in grade eleven, **Hannah Bracken** and **Kimberly Gero** in grade ten, **Claire Mielke** in grade eight, and **Carly Thomas** in grade seven. Kudos to all these hard working Monterey students from both schools!

Monterey ushered in the holiday season on the weekend of December 19 with a production of Dylan Thomas's *A Child's Christmas in Wales* at the Monterey Meeting House. **Lindsay Pontius** adapted and directed the production, and a number of Monterey residents were involved. Among them were **Sandy Banks, Sudi** and **Cora Baker, Deirdre** and **Colm Higgins, Tom Weldon, Anita Carroll-Weldon,** and **Wayne Dunlop**, who took care of the recorded music, and **Tarsi Dunlop**, the stage manager, who kept everything running smoothly. Visiting performers from surrounding towns included **Sophie** and **Shawnee Tannenbaum, Alexia Trova, Linda Wright**, and **Reilly Hadden**. The three performances were well attended, and a good time was had by all.

A very happy New Year to all our readers. We enjoy hearing your news, and passing on Birthday and Anniversary greetings. If you have any you would like to share, please drop me a line at P.O. Box 351, Monterey, MA 01245, or give me a call at 528-6691, if possible, before the 12th of each month. If you prefer e-mail, my address is higgins@vgernet.net. Thank you so much.

— Ann Higgins

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Wednesday	3–5 p.m.
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	7–9 p.m.

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CALENDAR

Monday, January 18, The Town Hall will be closed in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. There will be no meeting of the Board of Health or Select Board.

Tuesday, January 19, Blood pressure clinic, 9-10:30 a.m., adminstered by the Visiting Nurses Association, Town Hall basement.

Saturday, January 23, Father-child field trip to Gould Farm, sponsored by the Family Network. See the animals and take a sleigh ride (if there is snow). Meet at the red barns at 10 a.m.

Saturday, January 23, Square and contradancing 8:30-11:30 p.m., at the Sheffield Grange, Route 7 Sheffield, MA. Music by Mountain Laurel, calling by Cindy Greene. All dances are taught and beginners and children are welcome. Refreshments served at intermission. Adults $5, children $2. for information call 413-528-9385 or 518-329-7578.

Saturday, January 23, Monterey Library 1999 Annual Film Festival begins with *The Adventures of Robin Hood* at 7:30. Admission is free and popcorn and juice are available for a nominal fee. See ad this issue for other films featured in the festival.

Monday, January 25, 10 a.m.-noon, South County La Leche League at the Guthrie Center, Great Barrington. Free advice and support for breastfeeding. For questions and directions call Maureen at 528-6619.

Saturday, January 30, Monterey Library 1999 Annual Film Festival continues with *Stagecoach* at 7:30. Admission is free. See January 23 listing for details.

Saturday, January 30, Tenth Annual Monterey Cup Hockey Tournament (weather permitting), in the rink behind the Firehouse, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. A come cheer on local ice-warriors in their bid for the cherished Monterey Cup.

THE OBSERVER

November 25-December 25

It's been such a warm month that a comparison with last year at this time seems in order.

	1998	1997
High temp. (12/7)	65.3°	43.9°
Low temp. (12/23)	9.1°	3.7°
Avg. high temp.	43.6°	34.3°
Avg. low temp.	27.7°	20.8°
Avg. temp.	35.7°	27.6°

High bar. press. (12/23) ..... 30.43"
Low bar. press (11/26) ..... 29.41"
High wind gust (12/1) ..... 41 m.p.h.
Wind chilled low temp. of (12/22) -23.8°

Precipitation on five days 2.29" rain.
Trace of snow.

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Herbert & Bernice Singer
Mary Jo Ruggles
Arthur & Alice Somers
Albert Shepard
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Our editorial address is *Monterey News*, P. O. Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245. We invite letters, articles, drawings, and photographs from readers. Please send submissions (on Macintosh disk if possible) by the fifteenth of the month before publication, addressed to the attention of the Editor. Send any change of address, or initial request to receive the *News* by mail (free!) to Barbara Tryon, Business Manager. We will typeset a text-only ad for your Monterey-based business, service, or event, or advertisers may submit an ad with graphics on a Macintosh formatted disk. Address your request for advertising rates and further information to the Editor, or telephone us in Monterey at 413-528-1170.

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Contributions from local artists this month: George Emmons, p. 14, Joe Baker, p. 15.

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